DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 158 944 RC 010 709

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TITLE Choices & Careers; Free to Choose: Socialization of Girls.
INSTITUTION Wisconsin Univ., Madison, Univ. Extension.
SPONS AGENCY Extension Service (DOA), Washington, D.C.
NOTE 14p.; For related documents see ED 152 446-449 and RC 010 701-709

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *American Indians; *Career Awareness; *Career Education; Counseling; *Females; Self Concept; Sex Differences; Sex Role; Sex Stereotypes; Social Attitudes; *Socialization; *Teenagers; Tribes
IDENTIFIERS *Career Development Project for Tribal Girls

ABSTRACT

Socialization is the way culture is learned and the individual is fitted into an organized way of life; it is the process whereby human beings get their personal identities, ideals, aspirations, values, disciplines, individuality and self-awareness. A girl's socialization is different from that of a boy. Boys are taught to be self reliant, strong, independent, aggressive, and competitive. Girls are praised for being passive, dependent, nurturant, and obedient. From the time she is very small a little girl is guided to the role of mate-mother. Such socialization is unrealistic. Nine out of ten women will work at some point in their lives. Many must be the sole support of themselves or their families. Girls must prepare for a career. Individuals are born with talents, abilities and potentialities, but training and education are necessary for them to be recognized. A counselor is a very important part of the socialization process because she can help girls learn of the many choices open to them and prepare for a life of many roles. Suggestions counselors can utilize to accomplish this are listed in the conclusion of this document. (Author/DS)

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Socialization Of Girls ---

by Delores Wolf

Illustrated by Vicki Wayman

About The Author

Delores Wolf, a Chippewa, was born and raised on the Bad River Chippewa Reservation in Wisconsin. She is 45 years old and the mother of four daughters—25, 24, 23, and 21. Two of her daughters are LPN's, one is a Native American counselor at Northland College, and the youngest is attending Haskell Junior Indian College. Delores returned to school after her children were grown and is now a junior at Northland College. She has been on the dean's honors list for the past two years. She began her college work with sociology as a major. Now she hopes to be certified as a secondary teacher in social sciences with an emphasis on sociology and Native American studies. Vicki Wayman, a member of the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewas, did the illustrations for the unit.

About The Program

"Socialization of Girls" has been developed as part of the project Choices & Careers, Free to Choose, a career development project for tribal girls. The project was developed with the assistance of tribal women in Wisconsin and was funded with special needs funds from Extension Service-USDA.

SOCIALIZATION OF GIRLS

There are volumes of books, articles, and papers written on socialization. Needless to say, everything that is written about socialization cannot be taught or learned in one short unit. But because of the importance of socialization, the concept is briefly discussed.

Socialization

Socialization is the way culture is learned and the individual is fitted into an organized way of life. It is a life-long process and is how a human being learns to take her place in group life. It is how she learns the values of her society. Socialization is a process whereby human beings get their personal identities, ideals, aspirations, values, disciplines, individuality, and self-awareness. It is how one becomes a person.

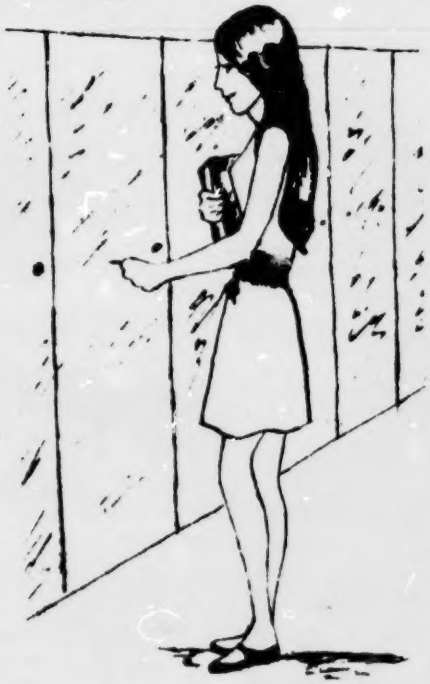
An infant is born into the world almost like a clean blackboard but with certain biological drives and needs. For example, a baby is born with a hunger drive. But how is this hunger drive satisfied? She learns that by crying she will get her hunger satisfied, because someone will bring her a bottle. She does not know that this is what will occur. This behavior is learned and is therefore a part of socialization. Another example of socialization is language. When an infant is born, she cannot talk. Learning a language comes through socialization. So socialization is not only possible but necessary. It is a learning process. It is learning how to act and how to behave.

How Is a Girl Socialized?

A logical question at this time might be, How is a child socia-

lized? How does she learn? A child learns through observation, through trial and error, through reward and punishment, through interaction with others, and through communication. Much of socialization is deliberate but some is unintentional or unconscious. Deliberate socialization is many times accomplished and supported with rewards and punishment. It may take place within the family, school, or church. Some examples of rewarded behavior are obedience, cleanliness, kindness, and honesty. Some examples of unconscious learning might be what a child learns from watching television, looking at pictures, listening to music, and observing what is going on around her. We can learn something without even being aware that we have.

What Sources Are Responsible for Socialization?

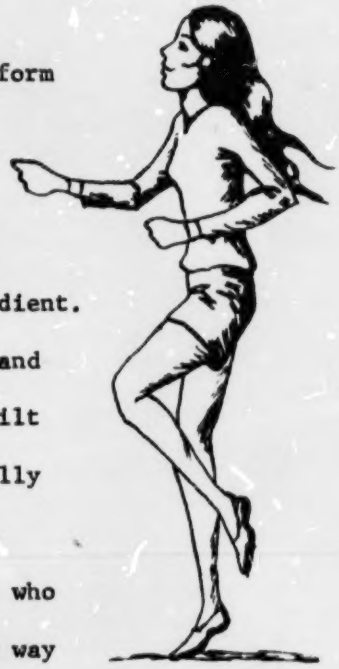


Who is responsible for the process of socialization? The most obvious and primary source of socialization is the family. But in a complex society such as ours, there are many other sources. Some sources are institutions, such as schools, clubs, and churches. The life of the community is still another socializing factor. Children also learn from playing with others. Since socialization takes place through communication, we should also mention the media, such as television, books, newspapers,

magazines, music, radio, and language. A child may learn simply by observing and listening to everything around her.

What Does a Girl Learn?

If a girl is born almost like a clean slate, how is she socialized? What does she learn? Is her socialization different from that of a boy?



In our society, girls are brought up to conform while boys are expected to achieve. Boys are taught to be self-reliant, strong, independent, aggressive, and competitive. Girls are praised for being passive, dependent, nurturant, and obedient. This difference and emphasis is built into boys and girls all through their lives. One way it is built in is how we handle babies. A baby girl is usually handled much more gently than an infant boy. We seldom see fathers roughhouse with little girls, who are often thought of as frail and soft. Another way the difference in boys and girls is emphasized is through toys. The toys for girls are usually dolls, doll houses, paper dolls, dishes, nurse kits, and toy furniture. Blocks, trains, punching bags, tool sets, baseballs, trucks, and footballs are usually thought of as toys for boys. How can we explain the difference? One reason might be how our society views the roles of females and males. Traditionally a woman's role was mate-mother, because the one great biological difference between male and female is childbearing. It was assumed that the mate-mother role was primary and if she did have a job, that was a secondary role. The reverse is assumed for a man. A man's voca-

tion is considered primary and his role as husband and father is secondary. Although most women hold a job at some time in their lives, work is not usually considered as fulfilling their personality needs, as it is for men. Many times we think of men as satisfied if they are in jobs they have chosen and prepared for. Usually a career is seen as being necessary for a man. We expect men to develop their talents and abilities. This is not always true for females.

Is the Socialization of Girls Realistic?

Can a girl prepare only for the role of mate-mother? Why is it important for a girl to prepare for more than that role? Why is it important for a girl to prepare for a career? To realize how important it is to have girls prepare not only for the role of wife-mother but also for a career, let's look at some facts about women from the U.S. Department of Labor.

1. About half of today's women marry by age 21 and have their last child at about age 30.
2. After her youngest child has entered school, a mother may have 30 or 35 years of active life before her.
3. Nine out of ten women will work at some point in their lives.
4. Many women are finding jobs, with 43.8 percent of all working-age women employed in relatively low-paying low-status jobs, with women earning 58 percent of what men earn in virtually the same job.
5. Among the 4.4 million women of minority race who were workers in 1973, slightly more than half (53 percent) were single, divorced, or separated; 15 percent were wives whose husbands had income below $7,000.
6. One out of ten women workers head a family. Half of all minority families headed by women live in poverty.

These facts help illustrate why a girl should prepare for a career.

Some other things to consider are:

1. Today the life expectancy of a woman is 75 years.
2. Some girls may choose to be single.
3. It is easier for a woman of today to seek employment because of all the labor-saving devices, prepackaged foods, and child-care centers.

Another view that isn't mentioned many times is that a woman may need to work to fulfill herself. In the past, women worked long hours keeping house and raising a family. Yet a woman could feel creative and gain satisfaction in some of her chores. For example, she could take great pride in making a quilt that had beauty but also was used to keep her children warm. All the things women have done in the past contributed to the economy of the family. A family couldn't have survived without a woman's canning, sewing, gardening, etc. Certainly, our ancestors contributed to the economy of the family by ricing, tanning hides, gathering plants, drying meat, etc. Yet they could take pride and have a feeling of creativity in their beadwork, baskets, quillwork, pottery, and weaving. But what about today in the age of technology and industrialization? In modern times, women may find it difficult to fill their time. They may have to seek employment outside the home to contribute to the economy of the family. With new inventions, women have more time to work and put their talents to work. Today, more educational opportunities are available for women. Most important of all, it is possible for modern women to make choices.

Another thought that is often overlooked is that a women may need to work to support herself. Despite the fact that most women will work

at some point in their lives, girls are usually not helped to deal with the fact as they are growing up. Education is usually the route to a career, yet how many times have we heard the statement, "Education isn't as important for a girl as it is for a boy?"

Becoming A Self

How does a person become I or Me? How does an individual acquire a self? George Mead, a philospher, and social psychologist considered an individual as the product of society. A self is molded or created. One could ask, But how does society get into the individual? This is accomplished by experiences with others. A child looks for love, approval or disapproval, interest or indifference from those who may come in contact with her in her daily life. Almost everyone likes approval and love. Usually no one likes disapproval. Another way of saying this is a person is molded by the attitudes of others toward her.

Individuals are born with talents, abilities, and potentialities. Although they vary from one person to another, they all depend on training for realization. But what one becomes depends a great deal on the encouragement and motivation she receives from others.

It is really important for an individual to feel good about herself or to have a good self-concept. Yet in our society, girls encounter many stumbling blocks. Some of the stumbling blocks a girl encounters during her growing-up years will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Can a girl feel good about her body? What is <u>beauty</u>? Everyone would like to feel beautiful, yet to have beauty is to have a perfect body. To emphasize this point, think of advertisements. A girl may worry if her nose is too long or too short, her ankles and legs are too skinny, she is too short or too tall, her hair is too thin, etc. A girl can't change these things, but the pressure is still there. It would be wonderful if girls could think more about being happy, kind, friendly, and peaceful. These are qualities that seem to produce beauty in people. If perfection of body weren't always emphasized, a girl could think more of inner beauty. She would also have more time to think how she

could emphasize her good points. Certainly it would help her feel good about herself.

A strong and healthy body is such an asset, yet how little time and thought is devoted to this! Too many times, girls are not encouraged to participate in sports and athletic events. It has been a practice to put a great deal of time and effort into sports and athletic events for boys. Hopefully, there will be just as much effort put into sports and athletic events for girls. Girls should be encouraged to participate in any activity that will help them develop strong, healthy bodies.

It may be difficult for a girl to develop her talents, abilities, or potentialities if training and education are necessary for them to be realized. Studies show that girls excel in all subjects in grade school, yet when they reach high school, their grades decline. Probably this isn't surprising, because everything has reinforced the idea that a woman will find her greatest fulfillment in the role of mate-mother. If we assume that a woman will work at some point in her life, she may regret the lack of educational preparation or training.

What are the Roles of the Counselor in the Socialization Process?

If we agree that a girl must prepare for many roles, a counselor is a very important part of the socialization process. If we believe that every person should be free to pursue whatever he or see chooses, girls should be informed of the many careers open to them. Even though many girls will become mates and mothers, it might be more realistic for counselors

to encourage girls to prepare for a life of many roles.

There should be no limits to the possibilities of careers for girls. In the past, if a girl showed an interest in the medical sciences, she was counseled to be a nurse rather than to become a doctor. If we think of careers for girls, we usually think of nurses, teachers, office workers, store clerks, some factory workers, waitresses, and airline stewardesses. Certainly, these are good choices, if this is what a girl wants. But there are many other choices, which a girl may not think of because they are usually thought of as man's work. One example of this is welding. People who work with girls should remember that the Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of sex. Yet women are rarely encouraged to seek training for high-paying jobs such as electricians, plumbers, or carpenters.

What Can Counselors Do?

1. Inform and counsel girls on the need to prepare for a life of many roles.
2. Introduce girls to many types of careers.
3. Help girls develop talents and abilities they may have. Encourage and motivate them whenever possible.
4. Become informed of financial aids available for education.
5. Encourage girls to join in sports and athletic events. But also encourage them to join choirs, art classes, drama groups, bands, etc.—especially if they show an interest. They may take more of

an interest in school if they join in extracurricular activities. Some may be shy and may need just a little encouragement.

6. Remind girls that education and training are necessary for success in a job or career.
7. Have various career women come in and speak to the girls. You might have women who haven't been successful come in to speak.
8. Encourage and arrange for sports and athletic events for girls in the community. Promote team sports. Encourage girls if they have an interest.
9. Have Native Americans with careers come in and speak with girls.
10. Have girls and women who are now in different schools come in and talk to students.
11. Arrange field trips to different schools.
12. Schedule movies and slide series showing various careers.
13. Arrange to have women in the various arts visit the school. Usually Native Americans never think of dancing or singing or artwork as a career.
14. Encourage girls to get as much education or training as they can for whatever career they may choose, whether it be office work, teaching, singing, dancing, or one of the many other careers now available to women.
15. Encourage girls to study math and the sciences. Not every girl needs to know how to type.

16. Encourage and motivate girls to take leadership positions.

Please share your ideas with the group leaders so their list of suggestions can grow. Your help is welcomed.